



# Roseville Legend

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## Was Minnie's Cream Jar Made in Roseville?

By James L. Murphy

**R**obert J. Fulton (1836-1913) and George N. Fulton (1834-1894), both stoneware potters, were sons of James and Mary Ellen Fulton, who moved to Fultonham, Muskingum County, Ohio, from Virginia around 1835. George's stoneware production has been well documented (Russ 2004), but there is little published information on Robert James Fulton, who lived and was buried in Roseville.

The father, James Fulton (1797-1863), was in Fultonham as early as the 1840 census, listed as a bricklayer in 1850, and as a plasterer in 1860. (This is not in accord with Russ's speculation that he was a stoneware potter in Virginia before moving to Ohio.) His 16-year-old son George Newman Fulton was also a bricklayer in 1850 but by 1856 had moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he appears to have elaborately decorated a 20 gallon cooler for David Parr's pottery (Russ: 159-160). Very likely both George and Robert learned the potter's trade in Fultonham. George married Sarah Scha(e)ffer in Wood County, West Virginia in 1867, following his service during the Civil War, working in Parkersburg at the forerunner of the Donaghoe Pottery before starting his own pottery in Covington, Allegheny County, Virginia, and eventually ending his career in Botetourt County, Virginia (Russ *op cit.*).

Although Russ (2004: 148) believes that Robert James Fulton "apparently" operated a pottery in Marietta while a half-brother William Henry (1823-?) worked with the father in Zanesville, there is no evidence for this, and it is believed that William H. may actually have moved to Iowa, where he farmed for the rest of his life. Like his brother George, Robert James Fulton served during the Civil War, very briefly but with life-changing results. He enlisted at Zanesville, May 2, 1864, in Co. K, 159<sup>th</sup> O.V.I., serving under Captain George B. Weaver, another Roseville potter, and was mustered out August 22<sup>nd</sup>, due to "malarial poisoning & prostration of the nervous system caused by malaria & cold & exposure."

In 1870 Robert was a stoneware manufacturer in Roseville, where he had lived before the war; in the same household was his young brother-in-law, 16 year old



Mystery surrounds which Minnie this five gallon cream jar was made for and whether it was made in Roseville or elsewhere. [Photo provided by James L. Murphy]

Cyrus Wilson, "works Potter's shop." Robert had married Marietta (Etta) Wilson December 24, 1862, she and Cyrus being children of Isaac Wilson, a Uniontown (Fultonham) potter who had died in 1860. Quite likely it was at Wilson's pottery that Robert and George learned their trade. Probably soon after their marriage and definitely by 1862 Robert and Etta moved to Roseville.

According to his Civil War pension application, after the war Robert Fulton lived in Muskingum County except for the years 1875 to 1888, when he lived in Guernsey County. In Cambridge, he began a pottery with Col. Milton Barnes, a lawyer, Guernsey County prosecuting attorney, and later Ohio Secretary of State. (Cambridge *Jeffersonian*, Nov 15 1877). On

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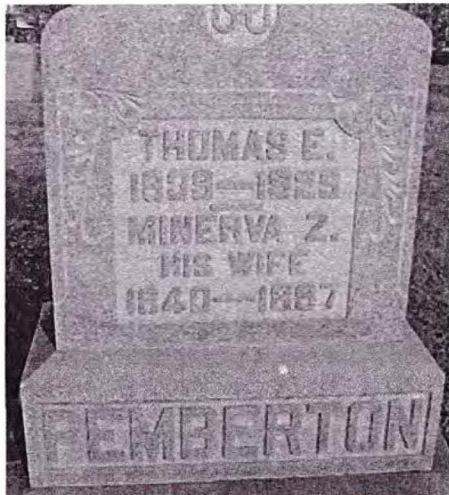
## Was Minnie's Cream Jar Made in Roseville?

August 18, 1881, **Robert Fulton** presented pottery to be put in the new court house cornerstone, where, presumably it still remains.

By March, 1890, **Robert Fulton** was working at the **Weller Pottery** in Zanesville, and **Samuel A. Weller** (1851-1925) witnessed Fulton's declaration for a pension, stating that Fulton had worked in his pottery for about 3 ½ years but was no longer able to throw pots. Weller allowed that he had known Fulton all his life, from their early days in Newton Township. It is very possible even, that Fulton made "Minnie's Cream Jar" for Weller's bride, **Hermin(n)ie C. Pickens**, whom **Samuel A. Weller** married in January, 1885, although Fulton at that time lived and worked in Cambridge, Ohio. **Sam Weller's** mother, **Mary Fulton Weller** (1826-1914) was the wife of **Jacob Weller** (1816-1871) and the half-sister of **Robert J. Fulton**. (There has been some confusion by Weller historian **Ann McDonald** (2006) who states that **Jacob Weller** married **Mary E. Fulton** on March 12, 1846, but **Mary E. Fulton** was actually Robert's wife, not his half-sister.) So it is very possible that "Minnie" was **Mrs. Samuel A. Weller**, who went by that name, though the day may have come when her cream jar did not comport very well with the large Sicard vases and Dickensware jardinières that adorned the Weller mansion on Sixth Street in Zanesville.

There is another possibility, however. **Robert J. Fulton** died in Zanesville June 1, 1913, and was interred in Roseville Cemetery, in a plot adjacent to the graves of **Thomas E.** (1838-1929) and **Minerva Z.** (1840-1887) **Pemberton**. **Thomas E. Pemberton** was the railroad stationmaster in Roseville for many years and undoubtedly knew **Robert Fulton** prior to Fulton's moving to Cambridge. Did he commission a cream jar for his wife or is the adjacency of the Pemberton and Fulton graves simply coincidence? Despite extensive research, genealogist **Carole Williams** has not been able to find a definite link between the Pemberton and Fulton families, so the adjacent location of the graves may simply be coincidence. Nor, for that matter, do we know whether **Minerva Pemberton** went by the nickname "Minnie."

So, **Minnie Weller** or **Minnie Pemberton**? Take your pick, though it is also well to bear in mind that the 1880 census lists no fewer than 17 women named "Minnie" in Cambridge.



Does anyone know if Minerva Pemberton went by the nickname "Minnie?" [Photo provided by Robert Weller and William Dilts,

### References

- McDonald, Ann Gilbert  
2006 *All About Weller, Book II*. Swan Song Press, Marietta, Ohio.
- Russ, Kurt C.  
2004 The Remarkable Stoneware of George N. Fulton, Circa 1856-1894. *Ceramics in America* 2004, p. 157-178.

We fondly remember  
Leslie Cope  
1913-2002

